

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 PARIS 18436 01 OF 02 301916Z

64

ACTION EUR-25

INFO OCT-01 EA-11 ISO-00 SAJ-01 SAM-01 OMB-01 CIAE-00

DODE-00 PM-07 H-03 INR-11 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-07 PA-04

RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-03 SS-20 USIA-15 IO-14 AID-20 EB-11

TRSE-00 DRC-01 /161 W

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R 301748Z JUL 74

FM AMEMBASSY PARIS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1237

AMEMBASSY VIENTIANE

AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMCONSUL HONG KONG

USLO PEKING

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 PARIS 18436

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, FR

SUBJECT: QUAI DIRECTOR FOR ASIA'S VIEWS OF ASIAN
PROBLEMS

SUMMARY: IN PERIDIC TOUR D'HORIZON OF ASIAN
PROBLEMS

ON JULY 26, QUAI DIRECTOR FOR ASIA, FROMENT-
MEURICE, DISCUSSED LAOS, CAMBODIA, VIETNAM AND SOUTH
KOREA. FRENCH WERE CONCERNED ABOUT SOUVANNA'S HEART
ATTACK, BUT THOUGHT THAT FABRIC OF LAO AGREEMENT WOULD NOT
BE RENT UNLESS "RIGHTISTS" STAGED AN ACT OF FORCE.
THERE WAS STILL NO PROSPECT FOR TALKS TO RESOLVE THE
CAMBODIAN PROBLEM; THE KHMER COMMUNISTS APPEARED TO
SEEK FIRST AN INTERNATIONAL POLITICAL VICTORY IN THE
UN AND THEN MILITARY VICTORIES IN CAMBODIA. PROSPECTS
FOR TALKS BETWEEN THE GVN AND PRG WERE NOT IMPROVED.
THE GOF WILL WISH TO DISCUSS WITH US LATER THE ROK
STRATEGY FOR HANDLING THE KOREAN PROBLEM IN THE UNGA.

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PAGE 02 PARIS 18436 01 OF 02 301916Z

1. LAOS. FROMENT-MEURICE SAID THE FRENCH WERE AT

FIRST DISMAYED BY SOUVANNA'S HEART ATTACK, BUT ARE NOW ENCOURAGED BY THE FAIRLY FAVORABLE PROGNOSIS. GOF STILL CONSIDERS HIM THE INDISPENSIBLE MAN; NO SUCCESSOR COULD HAVE THE AUTHORITY OVER THE TWO SIDES THAT SOUVANNA HAS. THEY WERE ALSO REASSURED BY THE CALM IN VIENTIANE SINCE THE PRIME MINISTER'S ILLNESS. ALTHOUGH THERE WAS THE POSSIBILITY THAT SOME OF THE "RIGHTIST" MILITARY MIGHT DO SOMETHING FOOLISH, FROMENT-MEURICE WAS CONVINCED THAT THE LPF AND DRV WISHED NOTHING TO OCCUR TO UPSET THE AGREEMENTS. THE LPF, FOR EXAMPLE, DID NOT EVEN WANT SOUVANNA TO LEAVE THE COUNTRY FOR CONVALESCENCE. FROMENT-MEURICE THOUGHT THAT SOUVANNA WOULD HAVE TO BALANCE THE SHORT-TERM DANGERS INHERENT IN ABSENTING HIMSELF FROM THE COUNTRY AGAINST THE ADVANTAGES FOR LONG-TERM STABILITY OF HIS HAVING A TRULY EFFECTIVE CONVALESCENCE, WHICH WOULD BE POSSIBLE ONLY ABROAD. THE FRENCH WERE ALSO CONCERNED ABOUT THE ECONOMIC SITUATION IN LAOS; THE PROBLEMS OVER RLG ACCEPTANCE OF IMF RECOMMENDATIONS (DEVALUATION) SHOWED HOW BADLY THE PRINCIPLE OF "UNANIMITY BETWEEN THE TWO SIDES" WOULD WORK WHEN THERE WAS NO SOUVANNA TO BE A POSITIVE ARBITER.

2. CAMBODIA. FROMENT-MEURICE SAID THAT IT SEEMED THAT THE SIHANOUK POSITION ON "NEGOTIATIONS" HAD HARDENED IN RECENT WEEKS. GOF WAS NOT AWARE OF THE KC POSITION SINCE IT HAD NO CONTACTS WITH SOMEONE LIKE KHIEU SAMPHAN. THE PRC LINE ON NEGOTIATIONS WAS HARDER THAN BEFORE, AND IT SEEMED THAT THE KHIEU SAMPHAN VISIT HAD RESULTED IN INCREASED PRC AID FOR KC MILITARY EFFORTS. HE THOUGHT THE KC WOULD CONCENTRATE FOR THE NEXT FEW MONTHS ON WINNING THE UN CREDENTIALS BATTLE AND THEN IN THE AUTUMN WOULD USE THE ENHANCED MILITARY CAPABILITY PROVIDED BY THE PRC TO PUSH ON THE MILITARY FRONT. THE GRUNK HAD SAID THAT THE ALGERIAN PRESIDENCY WOULD PREVENT A REPETITION OF THE

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PAGE 01 PARIS 18436 02 OF 02 301913Z

64

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POSTPONEMENT VOTE OF LAST YEAR AND WOULD BE A KEY ELEMENT IN WINNING THE SUBSTANTIVE VOTE IN THE UN. FROMENT-MEURICE THOUGHT THAT THE GRUNK MIGHT THEN BE PREPARED TO TALK WITH THE GKR FROM A POSITION OF STRENGTH. IT WAS CLEAR THEY WOULD NOT TALK WITH LON NOL OR SIRIK MATAK, BUT ONLY DIRECT CONTACTS WITH THE OTHER SIDE COULD CLARIFY WITH WHOM THE GRUNK WOULD BE WILLING TO TALK.

3. VIETNAM. FROMENT-MEURICE THOUGHT THAT THE VIETNAM SITUATION WAS BASICALLY UNCHANGED. THE PRINCIPAL PROBLEM CONTINUED TO BE THE ECONOMIC SITUATION, AND IT WAS US AID HEARINGS IN THE CONGRESS WHICH WERE PERHAPS THE CRUCIAL EVENT AT THIS TIME. THE GOF WAS CONCERNED ABOUT THE LACK OF PROGRESS TOWARD RESUMPTION OF THE CELLE-ST.-CLOUD TALKS. AT A RECEPTION HE HAD TALKED WITH THE PRG PERMANENT MISSION HEAD (PHAM VAN BA) ABOUT THE WORKING OUT OF THE IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES FOR THE PRG IN SAIGON. BA SAID IT WAS MERELY A QUESTION OF HAVING THE GVN SIGN AN AGREEMENT
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PAGE 02 PARIS 18436 02 OF 02 301913Z

ON WHICH THE IMMUNITIES AND PRIVILEGES WERE LISTED. FROMENT-MEURICE ADVISED BA TO ACCEPT ASSURANCES WITHOUT DEMANDING A SIGNATURE WHICH WOULD PERHAPS RAISE AGAIN THE PROBLEM OF "RECOGNITION" ON WHICH THE GVN WOULD NOT YIELD, AS THE YEARS OF NEGOTIATIONS HAD SHOWN.

4. KOREA. FROMENT-MEURICE SAID THAT THE ROK HAD RECENTLY GIVEN THE FRENCH GOVERNMENT ITS STRATEGY FOR HANDLING THE KOREAN PROBLEM BEFORE THE UNGA. AFTER THE GOF HAS BEEN ABLE TO STUDY THE ROK PROPOSALS, HE WOULD LIKE TO DISCUSS THE KOREAN UNGA PROBLEM WITH US.
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